The Black Cat

DECEMBER
1907

The Adventure of the White Pumpkin

Run to the Swift

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His Mr. Gumbey

Through the Heart of Davy Crockett

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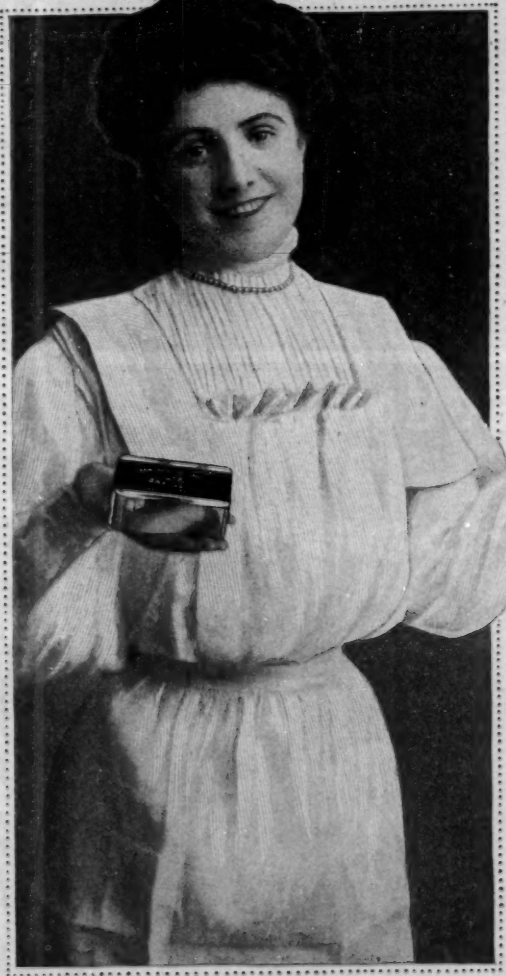

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The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

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The Adventure of the White Peacocks.*

BY ELIZABETH FLINT WADE.

HERE came a sudden, warning snap! I was walking up Broadway on a lovely June day, and you can understand my feelings when, just as I was leaving the Vienna Café, where I had eaten a most delicious Spanish omelette, — I knew my stocking supporter had given way!

If I had been quick-witted I should have slipped into the yard of Grace Church and, in a doorway behind one of those friendly pillars, repaired the damage unobserved. I thought of turning back to the café, but I couldn't walk through that crowd of people with a roll of black silk covering my shoe and a strip of yellow silk dragging after, and for the same reason I could not cross the street to the St. Denis and seek in the ladies' parlor the services of a friendly maid.

It happened to be the right-hand strap, so I kept close to the buildings and clutched my skirts tightly, hoping to prevent the stocking from succumbing to the laws of gravitation. How I wished I had paid a little more attention to what Aunt Clymena was saying at the dinner-table the night before. Aunt Clymena is a spiritualist, and she was telling that the law of gravitation could

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be overcome by spiritual means, and that anyone could be a levitator who possessed certain qualities. A levitator, she said, could get right off the earth, and could make things stay in the air instead of coming down. It sounded silly enough, but, if there was anything to it, I was sorry I hadn't found out how it was done, for my mind was not capable of levitating that stocking. It slid slowly down, down, over my shoe, and the safety pin, — or rather the unsafety pin, — attached to the end of the rubber strap, clinked on the pavement every step I took. I am sure if I had had bells on my toes like that unhappy lady in the nursery rhyme, they could not have made more noise than that miserable pin. It made me feel as if every eye on Broadway were turned on me.

It looks well enough in a play to see a pretty girl stoop to fasten her shoe or adjust a refractory band, but it is a very different matter on a public street. I looked eagerly for a door or stairway, but though they were plenty there were always people going in or out. I know now how a hunted fox feels when it is seeking cover.

All at once I came to a short flight of steps leading to a shop below the level of the sidewalk. The lower story of the building was recessed back like a porch. The interior of the shop looked dim and dusty, and against the wall outside the door hung a great rug. No one was either coming out or going in, and the thought came to me that I could step down the stairs, disappear behind the rug, and appear with my stocking once more securely fastened.

In a jiffy it was done. As I pushed the rug aside and stepped out I saw by the door a case of the most beautiful butterflies you can imagine. I stood admiring them and thinking how stunning party gowns would be in some of the colors, and "day-dreaming" how I would have thus and so when I "came out," when someone touched my arm. I turned quickly and there stood the strangest looking person I ever saw — old and weazened, with white hair curling on the shoulders, but with eyes as bright as a child's. I thought at first from the hair and the dress, which was of thick, gray crêpy stuff and came almost to the floor, that it was a woman, but a second glance showed me my mistake. He waved his hand toward the interior of the shop.

"Perhaps the Young Miss," he said, bowing low and speaking in a foreign-sounding voice, "would like to come inside and look

at my Lepidoptera? I have some far finer, if Miss will come inside, yes?"

I was half afraid, he was so queer looking, but the roar and bustle of Broadway sounded in my ears, and I saw hundreds of feet rushing to and fro on the sidewalk, so it seemed safe enough.

"Here is something the Young Miss would like to see, yes?" he said as I stepped inside the shop.

He touched a button and a glass case attached to the wall was instantly illumined and in it I saw the most resplendent, magnificent, gorgeous, — well, if I used every synonym in Thesaurus it would not convey to you the beauty of that butterfly in that case. Neopto-something he called it, but it would be transcendently beautiful by any other name. It was perched on a pale yellow orchid, and its wings must have measured eight inches from tip to tip, and were of the most exquisite azure. Under the electric light they glistened like burnished metal. All at once they began to wave to and fro, and the light flashing across them showed the most wonderful iridescent opal tints.

"Oh, oh, it's alive," I exclaimed.

"No, Miss, it is not alive," said the old man. "I make it seem alive that Miss may see the rare colors. Would Miss like to see another, yes?" He always ended his sentences with either yes or no, spoken with a rising inflection.

Well, I was so fascinated with all the curious things that I never thought of the time, when all at once there was a sudden flash and a loud clap of thunder. I ran to the door to see the rain coming down in torrents. Well, I was in a pickle. It was four o'clock, and I had to be at Seventy-seventh Street and Madison Avenue at five o'clock for my music lesson, and I hadn't a sign of an umbrella and my prettiest summer gown would be spoiled.

The old man said the shower would soon be over, but I told him I must go at once and why, and immediately he produced a pair of rubbers and an umbrella. The handle of the umbrella was of lapis-lazuli, and though I hesitated he insisted on my taking it, and said I could return it on the morrow.

"Miss is in haste? Then she can run quickly to Astor Place, and by the Subway arrive soon at the Forty-second Street. From thence the elevated cars of the Third Avenue will bear her on the

instant to the Seventy-sixth Street, and she will perhaps have time to do a favor for the old man. On Seventy-seventh Street a customer must have a Purple Emperor this day. Would Miss leave it at the door, no ?"

There was something about the old man that made you feel you would do anything he asked of you, and I was glad to oblige him. I had such luck that I was soon at Seventy-sixth Street, and the house on Seventy-seventh Street was the very one I had hoped it would be. A most uninteresting exterior, but there were rumors of its splendid interior and of the beautiful woman who lived there, called the White Woman, because she was never seen in anything but that color.

I had not thought I would be asked to enter, but the pompous butler who opened the door waved me into the hall and into a reception room from whence a maid conducted me up a carved and inlaid staircase which must have been taken bodily from some grand old castle. She ushered me into a room which had no visible windows, but it was light, and the walls and ceilings glistened like mother-of-pearl. In a white velvet chair sat the beautiful woman, gowned in white lace. She evidently expected me, for she extended her hand for the box, saying:

"You have brought the Purple Emperor, have you not?"

I said "yes," handed her the box, and turned to go, but the door had vanished.

"I must show you my Butterfly Room to reward you for your kindness," she said, and touching a pearl box on the table which must have concealed a spring, one side of the room seemed to melt away, disclosing a great court full of strange plants and trees and set about with stone vases, marble benches, and curious tables. In the middle was a great pool, in which everything was duplicated as in a mirror.

I followed the White Lady across the court, through a spacious hall into an octagonal room, the walls of which were covered with butterflies of every imaginable shape and hue, and so arranged that they gave the impression of mosaic work. It was a most wonderful collection.

"Butterflies are my hobby," she said, "but I never show my collection except to those rare persons like yourself who will keep

their existence a secret. I do not wish to be annoyed by newspaper people or idle curiosity seekers."

After that delicate compliment I wouldn't have mentioned them to the Queen of Sheba even, but as soon as I was home I called up my most intimate friend, Breda Romaine, and told her everything else but that. She didn't half listen, because she was all excited about the mysterious disappearance of a young girl who lived right in her block. She knew her only by sight, but to hear her talk you would have thought she was her dearest friend.

I returned the umbrella the next day, and Professor Donetti, — that was his name, — asked me to take some cocoons to the White Lady.

They were apple-green, with seven gold streaks each side, pretty enough for ornaments. I hoped to get another glimpse of the White Lady, — I was just in love with her, — but Sir Pompous took the package, bowed, and shut the door.

I didn't tell Aunt Clymena about the butterflies. All she expects of me is to practise my music three hours a day. The rest of the time is my own, but Uncle Carl sees that I am trained in all useful branches, and makes gymnasium work a specialty, for my mother died with consumption and he is afraid I have inherited her delicate lungs.

Breda's brother Louis is a "bug-hunter," and when Breda told him he went with us to see the butterflies, and was simply wild over them. He pointed out one with velvety black wings dashed with crimson and said it was a Hector. He knew the Waiter, the Mourning Cloak, the Painted Lady, the Question Mark, the Pearly Malachite, and lots of others.

Professor Donetti was so pleased with Louis's knowledge that he took us into another room and showed us glass cases in which cocoons were hatching.

"I search not for the butterflies," he said. "I get the cocoons from far countries, — then I have the fine specimens, yes?"

I said it seemed cruel to put them to death as soon as they had got their wings.

"Oh, no, Miss," he said. "They would live only a few days, beat their wings in pieces and perish. I preserve them that all may see their perfect beauty, yes?"

I thought I would rather have my few days, even if I did beat my wings in pieces and perish.

I went often to the shop, for the Professor told the most interesting stories of strange places where he had been, and I seldom went there without his asking me to take a package of cocoons to the White Lady. He explained that messenger boys were careless and his cocoons were so precious. I was never again asked to enter the house, but I often passed it, and one day saw that the windows were boarded up and knew the White Lady had left town.

Just after that Aunt Clymena went to Newport to see some great spiritualist from England, and took me with her. The day before we went I called at the butterfly shop and told the Professor where I was going.

"Oh, my dear Miss," he exclaimed. "This is indeed my day of good fortune. The White Lady is at her Newport cottage and demands of me White Peacocks. The cocoons have this day arrived. I can trust you, will you take them to her, no?"

I just jumped at the chance of seeing the inside of a Newport cottage, and joyfully accepted the charge. When we arrived, Aunt Clymena went in search of her spiritualist and I of the White Lady's cottage, which I found to be a magnificent dwelling situated at the very edge of the cliffs.

Sir Pompous opened the door and waved me into the dearest room I ever saw. It was in palest rose, and opened on a veranda from which a green pergola covered with pink roses led into a rose garden. I was about to sit down when two white dogs rushed into the room. If there's one thing I'm afraid of it is dogs, and these two fellows flew at me, and I expected to be torn in pieces on the spot. They knocked the package from my hand, and before I could wink they had pounced on it, torn it in bits and shaken the cocoons on the floor. They pawed and bit at them, but as a peculiar whistle sounded outside they pricked up their ears, and bounded out of the room faster than they had bounded in.

I stooped to gather up the pieces, and saw on the carpet what I thought at first were bits of glass, but which a second look showed me were jewels. I picked up a torn cocoon and out rolled another and added itself to the glittering heap. I was gazing at them, too amazed to touch them, when a soft voice said:

"You have brought my White Peacocks." I turned. It was the White Lady. She caught sight of the ruin, and exclaimed, "My cocoons, my precious cocoons, what have you done to them?"

"Oh, Madam," I cried, "it was not my fault, it was the dogs. They knocked them from my hand and tore them, and see, in the cocoons are diamonds, lovely diamonds."

"In the cocoons, how foolish," she said. "They are from my diamond bracelet, those naughty dogs have played with it and broken it."

"Oh, but Madam," I expostulated. "There was no bracelet. The diamonds came from the cocoons, for see here," and picking up another I showed her a jewel inside.

"Do not contradict," she said sternly. "The diamonds are from the bracelet, which is easily repaired, but my precious cocoons are ruined. No, do not touch them, I may perhaps save one or two," and taking a Japanese bowl from a table, she swept cocoons and diamonds into it.

I suppose I must have looked astonished, for her tone suddenly changed.

"Pardon me," she said sweetly, "I was so annoyed at the mishap to my White Peacocks that I forgot myself. Stay to luncheon with me, and over our coffee we will forget this little tragedy."

Aunt Clymena did not expect me till three o'clock, so of course I could stay, and that luncheon was a dream. I was secretly glad of the mishap that had given me this pleasure, for my hostess was a master magician at entertaining. As we rose from the table she said:

"I must show you my aqua-marine room — it is quite the jewel of my house."

We went up a shallow, winding stairway, along a wide corridor, at the end of which hung a silvery gauze curtain. She pushed it aside and ushered me into what was like a veritable grotto under the sea. The floor was of glass tiles the color of water when you look down, down into its depths. The walls seemed almost translucent, and the room was lighted by a glass dome of lighter green glass, moulded to represent flowing waves. There were the most beautiful sea-things all about, and I could only draw breaths of wonder and delight.

"Rest here a few minutes and look at all these queer curios. I will be back presently."

At first I was so interested in the room I forgot the time, but by and by I began to wonder why the White Lady did not return. All at once a feeling came over me that tons of water were about to overwhelm me and drown me. I flew to the curtain, thinking I would go into the hall, but to my dismay the doorway had vanished and the drapery swung against a surface apparently as free from crack or crevice as the walls of the room. As the curtain dropped from my hand there fell from its folds a letter. I picked it up and, glancing at the superscription, was amazed to see my own name. The note was short and to the point.

DEAR MISS EUSTAPHIEVE:

You have unfortunately stumbled on our secret, and to prevent your betraying us you must not be allowed to return home. You will be taken to a foreign land and placed in a Sisterhood, where you will be far safer than with your erratic aunt. No personal harm will come to you. You will be thoroughly educated in music, for which you have a decided talent. After five years you will be released.

Sincerely yours,

LA PAPILLON.

What secret had I discovered? Was it the diamonds? But no, there was no secret about them, surely. But made a prisoner, taken to foreign lands! I would not submit. They should release me. I thought of the mother-of-pearl room and its secret opening. This room must have a similar device. I ran my trembling fingers hastily over every roughness and depression where the doorway had been, but with no result. I tried the other walls, I became frantic, I would escape, and ran round and round the room. There was a peculiar odor in the air. It oppressed me, stifled me. I called and called, but there was no answer. I stamped furiously on the hard tiles and suddenly the side of the room opposite the entrance opened and there was a wide iron balcony and beyond the smiling sea.

I leaned over the railing and looked down, down at the jagged rocks far beneath. No possible means of descent, and sure destruction if I attempted the leap into the sea. A small box stood at one end of the balcony, and in my rage I kicked the inoffensive thing, overturned it, and out tumbled a stout coil of rope, one end of which was made fast to an iron staple which had been con-

cealed by the box. A weight was fastened to the free end and, tying my handkerchief above so that I might follow its fall with my eye, I paid out the rope over the balcony. Joy ! the weight touched the rocks on the beach. Off came my Oxfords and, tied loosely about the rope, they slipped down its length. Then I wound the rope about me, adjusting it over my foot carefully so that I might control my descent. Not for fun had I learned at the gymnasium how to escape from a burning building by means of a rope. I am sure I could never do it again, but I went down that rope as easily and steadily as if it had been only twenty feet instead of two hundred, and a feather bed at the end to break a possible fall.

Perhaps you think my shoes weren't on with a lightning change move. I skipped over those rocks like a chamois. It was low tide and I ran swiftly, never once looking back. By and by I came to a path leading to the top of the cliff, up which I made good time and never once stopped till I reached the hotel where I found my "erratic aunt," who gave me a good scolding for being two hours late.

I never breathed a word to her as to my adventure, but as soon as I was home I told Breda and Louis all about it. We went right away to the butterfly shop to tell Professor Donetti, and what do you think? The shop was closed and a sign "To Let" in the window.

Louis couldn't keep the story from his father, and Mr. Romaine, who is a great lawyer, ferreted the whole thing out.

It seems that Professor Donetti was a smuggler of precious stones, though seemingly a dealer in rare butterflies and cocoons. The cocoons were taken by his agents, the chrysalis cunningly extracted and a jewel put in its place. No one ever so much as suspected him. The White Lady and he worked together, and through her the jewels were distributed and sold. The different jewels had the names of different cocoons. The Purple Emperor held rubies, the Pearly Malachite held pearls, the White Peacocks held diamonds.

The Professor imported real cocoons along with the "treated" ones, but cocoons do not demand so much duty as precious stones.

I was one of the innocent idiots who had carried no one knows

how many thousands of dollars worth of jewels to the White Lady, and had I mysteriously disappeared like the girl Breda was so excited about, the illicit trade would have gone on with some other young girl as a messenger, for it was through gaining the admiration of young and inexperienced girls, like myself, that the White Lady was able to avoid detection. She cared nothing for butterflies, her interest being solely in the cocoons which concealed untold wealth. The Butterfly Room was only a blind.

The White Lady disappeared at the same time with Professor Donetti. The house on Seventy-seventh Street was rented on a long lease, as was also the cottage at Newport, and neither house had much furniture, only a few rooms being gorgeously decorated.

I begged Mr. Romaine and Louis not to tell my Uncle Carl, for I knew I would never be allowed out without a guardian if he knew, and Louis said if I would promise to let him and Breda accompany me in any future adventures, they would keep my connection with the affair a secret.

I had left my hat behind me in the cottage, and explained to Aunt Clymena that I had lost it on the beach, and she had bought me a tam-o'-shanter to wear home.

A day or two afterwards I received an express package.

When I opened the box I found my hat, and wound round it was a point lace scarf pinned with a pearl pin, fine enough for the queen. At the bottom of the box was this note:

> DEAR MISS EUSTAPHIEVE:
>
> Please accept the scarf and pin as a token of admiration for your daring. If you are looking for a calling in which to become successful, I would advise you to try that of a samphire gatherer.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> LA PAPILLON.

Aunt Clymena was not at home when it came, and I was glad enough for that!

Not to the Swift.*

BY HENRY ADELBERT THOMPSON.

ALL the way down the avenue, through the unfamiliar side streets, out the length of the ocean steamship pier, up the gangplank of the *Aldegonia,* and across the deck to where Mr. and Mrs. Fred Colby were standing by the rail, Margaret Allison was unpleasantly conscious of being in flight. She was escaping from a man — from two men. For days, a subtle, gradually clarifying instinct had warned her that Harold Farrington and James Winter were both very near the point of declaring themselves, and she was not ready to give either of them a definite answer. She liked both men, and found in each traits of which she disapproved. She did not admire Farrington's disposition to simply spend the income from a very large inheritance. The man she would marry must, she had often decided, possess a compelling personality, must represent daring, effort, achievement. On the other hand, these were precisely the qualities dominant in James Winter; and the girl was a little afraid of Winter, of a certain commercial ruthlessness she thought she could discern in his character, of a concentrated desire to advance his own interests which might, she feared, make him indifferent to the welfare of others, or even, at a crisis, cruel. Perhaps the very breadth of the difference between Farrington, the yachtsman and golfer, and Winter, the powerful cotton broker, and, in the language of the street, "the man that busted the Sully corner," made it more difficult for Margaret to choose than it would have been if her suitors had possessed less obvious and impressive points of dissimilarity. At any rate, not feeling ready to choose, and not relishing the prospect of having a premature decision forced upon her, the girl hastily packed her trunks and fled to the out-going *Aldegonia* and

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the chaperonage of Mrs. Fred Colby, who, as Margaret was aware, would sail on that steamer.

Mr. and Mrs. Colby's surprise at Margaret's appearance merged into pleasure when they learned that she would accompany them in their voyage and subsequent tour of Europe. The girl's coming, indeed, was the late acceptance of an invitation which Mrs. Colby, an old school friend, had repeatedly urged upon her. Mr. Colby at once bustled off to secure Margaret's seat at table and to look after other incidentals necessary to her comfort, and Mrs. Colby took advantage of the opportunity laughingly, but deftly, to secure from the girl a confession of the reasons which had caused her suddenly to change her plans for the summer. The young matron offered a bantering sympathy and dubiously hoped that the outcome would be satisfactory. Mr. Colby returned, smiling, the *Aldegonia* turned seaward, and Margaret Allison for nearly five hours pronounced her flight a complete success.

Shortly before dusk, as Mrs. Colby and Margaret sat in a sheltered spot on deck and watched a purpling land-line, a man sauntered toward them — a rather heavy, clean-shaven, dark-haired man, whose attractive face wore a smile of blended confidence and triumph. Mrs. Colby saw him first.

"What a fraud you are, Margaret," she whispered. "There's Jim Winter now."

The girl turned quickly, only to discover that her friend was right. It was unmistakably Mr. James Winter who was approaching with outstretched hand and a look of surprised gladness.

"Ah, Mrs. Colby, Miss Margaret, this is a pleasure as great as it is unexpected," he said, coming to a stand beside them.

"Why, Mr. Winter," cried Mrs. Colby, "what in the world is sending you across the water this time of year?"

"Business," he replied. "We are about to open a London office, and it is necessary for someone to be on the ground."

"Your decision must have been taken suddenly," remarked Margaret, with an inscrutable smile.

"It was," replied the young man, so frankly that Miss Allison had not a peg left on which to hang a suspicion. In fact, her sailing plans had been made so hastily that she did not think it

possible for Winter to have received information of her intended departure. In this she showed her unfamiliarity with one of the important features of modern domestic life, the telephonic leakage, for which servants are responsible, and which usually has its reward. On the whole, it was possible only to make the best of a situation which, as Mrs. Colby saw at once, and Margaret later, had its humorous side; so Winter was made at home in the party, and there was nothing in the girl's manner to indicate that she had hurriedly left New York for the especial purpose of escaping this man and one other. The evening passed pleasantly. It was a clear, starlit night, with a cool breeze. The four friends sat on deck until a late hour. When the ladies at last retired, Mrs. Colby said, on the way to their staterooms:

"Score one for Jim Winter!" "I've heard you say you like the kind of man who arrives."

"Do you think that a mere coincidence should count?"

"Nonsense," replied the chaperon, decisively. "Jim Winter's movements aren't regulated by chance."

Margaret lay awake for a couple of hours, wondering whether this were true, whether Winter really had been clever enough to anticipate her departure by the *Aldegonia* and, what was most important, whether she was gratified or annoyed by the fact that he had followed her. Simply because she could not determine how far chance accounted for his presence aboard the ship, she was unable to define her own mental attitude.

If he had merely happened to sail by the same vessel, it would be unfair to blame him. If, on the other hand, he was there because she was, it was equivalent to a notification that she might expect a proposal on the voyage, and she found this prospect rather disturbing. It was a question, in that event, whether the young man's enterprise should count for or against him.

In the morning, as Mrs. Colby and Miss Allison were about to leave the breakfast table, a diminutive, uniformed messenger brought Margaret a business-looking envelope. She took it in surprise, saw that it was addressed to her and then, noting the imprint — "The American Marconi Company, Limited" — understood that it was a wireless message.

"From Harold Farrington?" said Mrs. Colby, guessing, with

a view to subsequently knowing. "Come to my room and read it. I'm dying to know what he has to say for himself."

"I have very few secrets from you, my dear Connie," Margaret observed, pausing in the act of opening the envelope with a hair pin, "but I may possibly decline to let you read this message." However, after a glance at it, she handed it over. It was quite colorless. The enclosure contained these typewritten lines:

NEW YORK, June 9, 1904.

MISS MARGARET ALLISON,
Aboard the *Aldegonia*.

The orchids I would have brought, had I known of your sailing, will be delivered to you at Queenstown. Hope you are having fine weather and that your seat at table is right. Regards to the Colbys.

HAROLD FARRINGTON.

"The boy isn't so slow," Mrs. Colby remarked, after she had read the message. "He doesn't stop at wireless tolls when it's a question of letting you know that he hasn't forgotten you."

Miss Allison was not the only passenger who received a wireless message that day. About four o'clock Mr. Winter had one, the perusal of which seemed to perplex and disturb him. He studied the slip attentively before making a remark.

"What do you think of this, Colby?" he said, finally. "Gibbs reports a rumor that Sullivan is trying to turn the same trick he failed in last year."

"What do *you* think of it?" asked Mr. Colby, who, though he did not speculate, followed important market events.

"That it's only a scare. We know that Sully was cleaned out a year ago, and there isn't a man in New York foolish enough to back him for a bull movement in cotton this season. He knows how, all right, but he hasn't the money and can't get it."

Still, the news of a rise in cotton, of which Winter made no secret, and which was soon known over the ship, was responsible for some suppressed excitement. There were a number of brokers aboard, and these, gathering in little, shifting groups, interestedly discussed the probabilities and possibilities. Mrs. Colby and Margaret caught echoes of these conversations, but, understanding only vaguely, were not interested. Not so Winter. A word in cipher at the end of the telegram had told him that Gibbs, his partner, was doing precisely what he would have done himself

if he had been there — selling short in the belief that the advance was only temporary. Still, the fact that he was not personally on the ground worried Winter. In event of losing money, he rather preferred, as most people do, that it should slip through his individual fingers.

The second morning out, Margaret was awakened by the clear June sunlight shining in at the porthole of her stateroom. She found Winter at the breakfast table, obviously, shamelessly, waiting for her appearance, and, it must be confessed, she treated him somewhat mercilessly. A man's right to intrude himself upon her attention had, in her estimation, its matinal limitations.

On the deck, to which she finally, and rather condescendingly, allowed Winter to conduct her, Margaret, under the genial influence of the Colbys, became more tractable; but, in proportion as she thawed, Winter, true to his name, congealed. He became abstracted and unhearing, and at last, excusing himself, he wandered off to join a group of men at the rail, near the deck-cabin in which the Marconi operator was installed.

"The boy is a bit uneasy," said Colby, placidly, as having nothing at stake. "Sullivan is as good as a ghost in making a bear cotton broker go white."

"Sullivan? Who is Sullivan?" Mrs. Colby asked.

"Sullivan, my dear, is a man who, about this time last year, undertook to buy the entire cotton crop of the United States, with the purpose of afterward disposing of it at his own price. He so nearly succeeded that the men who were on the other side of the market don't like to think about it."

About the middle of the forenoon, a Marconi message informed Winter that a number of brokers, presumably representing Sullivan, were buying all the cotton in sight and bidding for more, the price going up by jumps. The cabalistic word attached indicated that Gibbs was still selling. The news plainly disquieted Winter. With an impatient exclamation, he tossed the slip of paper over the rail and began pacing up and down the deck. On the floor of the Exchange, he would have been perfectly master of himself, his eyes would have flashed with the joy of battle, but his mid-oceanic helplessness at once depressed and irritated him. He would have liked to send a message of advice, but his ignor-

ance of actual conditions made him hesitate, and, to one of his temperament, uncertainty was infinitely annoying. Margaret noticed the dark frown on his face and the brusque way in which he repelled those who questioned or attempted to detain him, and there arose in her mind a troubled vision of what life might mean as the wife of a man whose moods reflected the market.

While seated at the lunch table, Margaret was handed a second telegram from Farrington. Like that of the previous day, it was a purely conventional expression of his hope that she was having a pleasant voyage — a mere reminder that he was in existence and was thinking of her. Miss Allison glanced at it, and then, aware that Mrs. Colby was smiling significantly, thrust it rather hastily into the pocket of her jacket.

The remainder of the day revealed no incident of importance. Under the influence of a message which he received about four o'clock, and which conveyed the news that the bull movement in cotton had apparently reached its culmination half an hour before the closing of business, Winter recovered his equanimity. At dinner, and afterward on deck, he was composed, confident, full of anecdote, masterful, and Margaret, after she had retired to her stateroom and her berth, acknowledged to herself his fascination, and fell asleep dreaming about it.

Quite early the next morning, Margaret received a third message from Farrington. It was rather long, but contained nothing of importance, and the girl, after she had read it, handed it to Mrs. Colby. Winter also, somewhat sooner than he anticipated, had a telegram from his partner, which informed him that cotton had opened at the closing price of the previous day, and that there was a strong buying movement. Again, the sense of helplessness took possession of the broker and he resumed his restless walk up and down the deck. With all the intensity of his strong, dominating nature, he longed for a quarter of an hour in his office — just long enough to learn what was behind this extraordinary development in the market. He had not anticipated it in the least — no one had. He was quite sure that nothing in the condition of the crop justified it. Plainly, the upward tendency was purely speculative. Somebody was trying to corner the staple, and, in the past, such attempts had uniformly failed.

Gibbs was doing the right thing, but, in spite of repeatedly assuring himself that this was the case, Winter was nervously anxious.

Then an extraordinary thing happened. The wireless operator suddenly emerged from his cabin and affixed a bulletin to the board outside the door. A score of men hastened to inspect it, and there was an immediate buzz of expostulation, angry comment, curious question and voluble discussion. The announcement read:

> The American Marconi Company, Limited, has changed owners, and the president of the new company, Mr. Harold Farrington, of New York, has ordered the line closed for experimentation. Accordingly, no paid messages will be received for transmission until further notice.

This sudden closing of the telegraph line touched James Winter much more closely than it did any one else aboard the *Aldegonia*. It meant that he was debarred from receiving financial information of the utmost importance, that he must remain in ignorance of developments which promised to become unusual and threatening, that it was made impossible for him to give advice to his firm in a crisis, should one arise. And the tumult of excitement and anger into which Winter was thrown was vastly intensified by the appearance of Farrington's name as that of the man who was responsible for the closing of the line. A dozen quick suspicions sprang up in the broker's mind: That Farrington's suddenly acquired control of the wireless telegraph was only part of a plot to ruin him; that Farrington's millions were behind the bull movement in cotton; that Farrington would be responsible if the firm of Winter & Gibbs went to the wall, and that Farrington's ultimate purpose was the winning of Margaret Allison. As Winter thought about it his conjectures seemed to solidify into certainties, and the more indignant and angry he became. Farrington's commercial activities assumed the appearance of crimes, enormous crimes, of which he was the helpless victim. It did not occur to him that, in his rival's place and himself the operator, he would have regarded the bulling of cotton or the acquirement of a telegraph company as perfectly legitimate — he would have laughed at the sentiment which would cause a man to hold

his hand because another man, whoever he might be, was in an unfortunate position.

Finally, the deck of the *Aldegonia* quieted down, everybody accepting the fact that communication with the shore was definitely suspended. Even Winter succeeded in partially walking off his agitation and began to devote himself again to Margaret. Late in the afternoon, rather to the astonishment of all who saw him, the messenger boy advanced along the deck, the familiar "wireless" envelope in his hand, and delivered it to Miss Allison. Instantly, as if by preconcerted signal, there was a profound hush. The hum of lively conversation ceased. Margaret, conscious of the centering of all eyes upon herself, vainly strove to control the flush which mantled her features as, with assumed carelessness, she tore open the envelope, and read the enclosure. The message was very similar to those previously received, but ended with the sentence: "It may be of interest to some persons aboard the *Aldegonia* to know that cotton is twenty-two points higher than the top price of the Sullivan corner."

"Mr. Farrington continues to send his regards to both of you," Margaret said, in response to the intensely interested gaze of Mr. and Mrs. Colby.

"Does he say anything about the closing of the line?"

"Not a word," replied the girl. "He does mention, though, that cotton is twenty-two points higher than it went in the Sullivan corner."

The remark produced all the effect of a blow on Winter. He seemed to reel in his chair. Then, recovering himself, he sprang to his feet. If this news were true, it was imperative that he should get into communication with Gibbs, that he should find out what his partner was doing. The broker's face was working and his lips were twitching.

"Farrington's infernal deviltry is behind this thing," he spluttered. "The miserable cad is trying to ruin me just because I got ahead of him in an affair of sentiment."

"Mr. Winter! What do you mean!" cried Margaret, her eyes flashing.

"See here, old man, you're rather forgetting yourself," Colby admonished.

"Oh, if you people want to stand up for a man who will stab another in the back, all right," Winter sneered, now thoroughly infuriated. "Let me tell you that if I had your dear friend here for about two minutes I would punch his head."

Turning, the broker dashed furiously toward the telegraph operator, who was standing in the door of his cabin. There was a sharp colloquy, Winter demanding that a message be taken and the official replying that it was impossible. The last thing that Margaret saw, before a dozen people closed about the two excited men, was an exchange of blows, followed by a scuffle. Then she became aware that the second officer had dragged Winter out of the scrimmage and was leading him away forward.

The girl sat as if stunned. Her eyes were fixed, unseeingly, on the place where the brawl had occurred, while bewildering, disconnected thoughts raced tumultuously through her brain.

"It was dreadful," she murmured at length, speaking more to herself than to Mr. and Mrs. Colby, "but — I think I am glad I saw it."

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Colby.

"I understand, Margaret," interposed Mrs. Colby, quickly. "Come down to my room and rest," and she took the girl's arm.

Several months later, Fred Colby and Harold Farrington were seated in a windowed alcove of the Twenty-First Century Club. Colby had just finished a graphically told narrative of what had occurred aboard the *Aldegonia*.

"Things happened about as I expected," Farrington commented, after hearing his friend's story. "You see, I knew Jim Winter well enough to feel sure that if he could be put in a really tight place he would lose his head and make a fool of himself."

"Putting him in the tight place was probably expensive," Colby observed, in an inquiring way.

"It was worth all I dropped," replied Farrington, vaguely.

"More, I should say, even without knowing how much," Colby returned. "Margaret Allison is the finest girl I know."

One of the Immortals.*

BY FLORENCE SEYLER THOMPSON.

HARMONY reigned in Lakeview upon one subject at least. Although it was the first time in its history that the natives had been unanimous on a matter presenting such diverse characteristics, there could be no doubt of the absolute unanimity of their faith in the belief that Old Oliver could do things with his violin.

So when, in the fulness of time, the news reached Lakeview that the Society for the Discovery of Genius had been born and would celebrate its nativity by holding a great meeting in the nearby metropolis, where with a proper observance of parliamentary rule, they would, to speak metaphorically, with a purse as an anise bag, run a few geniuses to cover, Lakeview, as a complete and harmonious whole, thought of Old Oliver.

Now, in every village in the land there is probably one person who can handle a fiddle in a way to make one's pulses beat in one's heels, and still be an ordinary musician, without the divine fire in his soul that is supposed to distinguish that elusive and mysterious being we have come to know — by hearsay only — as a genius.

Though the neighboring village doubted it, there were some very sensible people in Lakeview, who knew that a good fiddler and a genius weren't necessarily one and the same thing; yet not one of them expressed the slightest hesitation in saying that if — well, there were several "ifs" — but if these obstacles could be surmounted, Old Oliver could knock any other genius, so to speak, into a cocked hat. But — here Lakeview was unanimous for the second time in its history — it couldn't be done.

And now, to come to the point: It is a delicate one. To be brief and blunt at the same time: If Old Oliver could be kept sober long enough to present himself and his violin before the So-

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ciety and show it what he could do, as old Jabez Merriweather put it, "no other gol-darned genius would stand a show." Old Oliver would come home crowned with bay leaves, and with the five-thousand-dollar purse in his pocket.

From this moment the fever for celebrity burned in the veins of the Lakeview inhabitants, and back of this natural ambition lurked a more thrifty one, — the hope that Old Oliver would obtain the money — and which they would see was properly invested for him — so that the possibility which at present loomed up alarmingly, of his becoming a public charge, would vanish from the horizon.

And above and beyond these two motives, — for the people of Lakeview, for all their narrowness and little jealousies, were humane — was one of genuine compassion for Madeline, Old Oliver's daughter, whose wistful young eyes told a far different story than her proud lips and haughtily carried head would have you fancy. Nobody knew where she and her father had come from, for all their five years' residence in Lakeview, for in all his marvelous confidences, Old Oliver never communicated the slightest information about himself or his daughter.

Tall, slim and soldierly, with prematurely whitened hair above dark eyes; a lean, smooth face; long, nervous hands, and the most polished and exquisite manners — that was Old Oliver. Yet behind his charm was an impenetrable reserve, and Lakeview never wholly forgave his reticence regarding family affairs. Clinging to his arm five years before was Madeline, a girl of seventeen then, with something pathetic about her, in spite of her high-bred air. A pretty girl with soft, brown eyes, and wind-blown hair, which last, the neighbors, in the days when pique was strong upon them, hinted as being hardly respectable. She, too, was charming, but incomprehensible.

They had taken a little cottage quite near the edge of the village, and Old Oliver — but he was not Old Oliver then — announced himself ready to give music-lessons on any instrument preferred, though the violin, as was speedily discovered, was his specialty.

He secured a class quite readily, Lakeview having aspirations, and for a time all went well. But however charming as a man, Old Oliver as an instructor was extremely irritable, and wrathful

pupils found some difficulty in adjusting their souls to a symphony while their knuckles ached from repeated taps from his baton.

Presently he had no class at all, and so far as Lakeview knew, he had no other means of subsistence than what he obtained by playing at dances and various merry-makings throughout the country; although the post-mistress hinted something about "foreign remittances" with an air of superior knowledge that was simply maddening.

Madeline never went out anywhere with the young folks of her age. At first there had been a disposition on their part to invite her, but she had declined gently but firmly, if a little sadly perhaps, and the invitations had not been repeated. It was ancient history now how Old Oliver's weakness was discovered. Some one had called at the cottage to secure his services for some festive affair, and Madeline had said he was ill. Her flushed cheeks, something in her manner, aroused suspicion; but not until a second "illness," did Lakeview really know that Old Oliver was enamored of the flowing bowl. It was then he became "Old Oliver," spoken half contemptuously, half in a pitying way.

And when Old Oliver knew that Lakeview knew, all his pitiful, shabby attempt at respectability vanished. Instead of going to the next town to buy his potion of the Lethal waters of forgetfulness, he got it in the village, and the skeleton, poor Madeline's faithful hands had tried to hold fast in the closet, stood fully revealed.

Lakeview would have dropped him at once from its consideration, the village being somewhat inclined to set itself upon a moral pedestal as it were, but for the fact that in all the countryside there was no one to fill Old Oliver's place. Were it a jig or a waltz-quadrille, Old Oliver put something into his playing of it that made delicious chills run down the spines of the young people; and when they looked at him, rapt, with closed eyes, bringing his bow down over the strings, his cheek pressed close to the violin, a strange little feeling of awe would creep over them.

The most unmusical person in the village, one who had said, with a little note of pride in her voice, that one tone sounded just like another to her, finally fell under the spell of Old Oliver's playing. And sometimes, late at night, people going past the Oliver cottage would hear music come out of the darkness, that set

hearts to dreaming that had long since forgotten to dream. Oh, yes, Old Oliver could do things with his violin.

And so, in his own way, he was a valuable man, and it became known gradually throughout the village, that when he was in his cups, no music was forthcoming. During the social season therefore, when he was constantly in demand at merry-makings, Old Oliver was generally sober, for the simple reason that his coadjutors on festive occasions — to speak more plainly, the men behind the bar — were in league with the enemy (for so Old Oliver regarded respectable Lakeview, when the thirst was strong upon him), to deprive him of a little stimulant. The aforesaid gentlemen, however, not being in the business exactly for their health, had yielded to Lakeview sentiment, only after bribes had been offered. Gain, more than Virtue, had won them over.

So, for weeks at a time, Old Oliver was in his right mind. Not that a mortal being would have known when he was drunk, except for one circumstance. He was the most genial, polished and urbane of gentlemen when he worshipped at the shrine of Bacchus; but the one circumstance was his marvelous memory, evidenced by his extraordinary communicativeness upon every conceivable subject, save his personal history. And when Old Oliver, apropos of nothing at all, began:

"On the fifth of December, twenty-one years ago this evening, gentlemen, you will recall that that most eminent scientist, Von Patzner, discovered the small-pox germ," his auditors became aware that Old Oliver was "going some," to speak in the patois; and anyone thirsting for information upon any historical or scientific point as far back as the days of Julius Cæsar, could have his curiosity satisfied if he remained in Old Oliver's company long enough.

When, in the fulness of time, he got down to the doings of the Ptolemies of ancient fame, Lakeview had arrived at that stage of acquired experience, when it knew that Old Oliver was very drunk indeed.

At this stage, he was generally started homeward, for the doings of the Ptolemies lacked piquancy; and he always walked home erect and soldierly, continuing his monologue, reaching the cottage and the days of the Early Greeks, simultaneously, as it were.

Now the subject of the Early Greeks was extremely distasteful to poor little Madeline. The mention of them set her instantly in search of the violin, which she would place in hiding; for the close intimacy with the Early Greeks his conversation suggested, was to her an infallible indication that the violin were better out of Old Oliver's hands. For Madeline had caused it to be generally understood, though her pillow could have given mute testimony at what cost, that her father would play on no violin but his own, and that when he was drunk he could not play at all, no matter how emphatically he might argue that he could.

So, about this time, when the Society for the Discovery of Genius was placarding the United States with its handbills, Lakeview had sat up in a body, so to speak, and taken notice of Old Oliver. For the violin was put away very often now, and it was plainly evident that he was pretty much on the down grade. And Lakeview dreaded the hour when he would be upon its hands; and it pitied Madeline too. For the postmistress said that the letters with the foreign postmark had stopped coming more than six months ago. Perhaps this accounted for the increased shabbiness of Old Oliver and his daughter, though, if possible, she held her head a little more proudly than usual — poor, little, sensitive, quivering heart.

And now the great meeting was less than three months away, and the fact that it was to be held almost at its very doors was the one theme of discussion in Lakeview. Public curiosity in fact, the country over, was intense, and information obtainable, most meager.

How the thing was to be managed at all, was puzzling. As there were, probably, running loose in the United States, some million or two odd geniuses, at least so regarded by themselves or their admiring families, the classifying of them would, it was thought, not only be a herculean, but a dangerous task as well. And how mere laymen were to decide upon the merits of the vast concourse of applicants, who would lay claim to the laurel wreath, was also puzzling, not to say baffling.

In time, however, coherence came out of the chaos. It was learned that the idea first was born in the brain of a rich man who, in a convivial moment, confided to a few intimates that he had

some thought of setting aside three millions for the unearthing of genius. Whether the gentleman would have held the same views the next morning, must always remain a matter for conjecture, for before morning came, the press had got hold of and spread the news from one end of the country to the other, and had even set vibrations in motion at remote corners of the earth.

So before the benevolent and kindly feelings induced by a judicious intermixture of apricot brandy and a dainty, violet-colored cordial had been succeeded by refreshing slumber, as far away as Zulu-land they had heard the news, and in remote Japan a committee was already at work, endeavoring to persuade, in its own peculiar fashion, an ancient daimio to enter the competition, his particular genius to evidence itself by reviving hari kari in a fascinatingly deft way.

When the American philanthropist again opened his eyes upon an orderly existence, he found himself committed to an extraordinary course of action, but like a gentleman and an American, he stood pat.

Before the plan could take definite shape, however, he was besieged, swamped, bowled over by geniuses, who were at infinite pains to convince him that theirs were the particular brows to be crowned with wild olives, and the gentleman was in a quandary. He got rid of them finally — for a consideration, and after months of toil and correspondence, he secured as judges, men who were high on the ladder of fame, who would — also for a consideration — vote upon the claims to recognition as geniuses, of such candidates as the philanthropist would bring before them.

As the philanthropist himself was a lover of the violin, only violinists were to be entered in the first contest, and when the colossal magnitude of the undertaking was fully grasped, it was realized that even the violinists who would lay claim to genius, would precipitate the Deluge; and the area was, therefore, restricted to one small state.

For this contest several preliminary examinations were to be held, and out of the list of successful candidates, the best of these only would finally appear before the Tribunal of the Long Haired, and show reason for the faith that was in them.

The philanthropist hoped, if in the interim the geniuses did not

kill one another, to have the winning candidate from each state appear in the final contest later, when it would be triumphantly decided who was the greatest American genius of them all.

His plan, as will be readily seen, was beautiful in theory, if somewhat hazardous to carry out.

So every one in this particular state was aware that on the fifteenth of October the contest would take place at the metropolis. How struggling genius was to get enough money to pay railroad fare remained a beautiful mystery, however.

In Lakeview, Madeline pondered the question, not of the fare, for they were but an hour's ride from the city, and that part of it could be managed, and was for that very reason the more soul-racking. Were the contest to be held in some far-away city, much as she would have longed to present her father as a candidate, it would not have been possible for lack of money, and the idea would have been dismissed at once.

But here, close at hand, was the opportunity and the man. And yet her heart was troubled. That her father was a genius Madeline believed as firmly as she knew the sun shone; that the village believed it too was only her father's due. Yet, night after night, when her father grew discursive over the Early Greeks, she would, after hiding the violin, bury her young head on her arms, and try to pierce with her soul's eyes, the gloom that had already encompassed them.

As the postmistress had stated, the foreign letters with the precious remittances had ceased coming. Death had removed the little benefactress, the kindly old aunt, who had so firmly believed in Old Oliver's genius, when the rest of the proud, old, English family had sneered and disbelieved; had not forgotten them, when Madeline, given the choice between a luxurious home or her father, had gone into exile with him; and now she was gone, and starvation stared them in the face.

In this wonderful opportunity so suddenly presented, lay hope, freedom from care, her father's redemption, and her own happiness. If she could only keep him temperate until the ordeal was over — only that — that was all she prayed for. She knew the prize would be his. Other geniuses? Bah! There were none beside him. If — if — She sighed hopelessly. It might take

days of waiting before her father's turn came before the Society. The strain on his nerves, the suspense. She knew what it would mean. In spite of her vigilance a recourse to Bacchus, and a discourse on the Early Greeks ! She shivered. And then to undertake this thing she must sacrifice every penny of their fast diminishing hoard. Her father would look shabby in any event, but — she smiled faintly — who ever heard of a well-dressed genius? But a possible several days' stay in the city would take every dollar. She did not think of failure. If once she could get him before the Society, his own dear, sane self, all would be well.

But if — well, if he did fail, it would be only a precipitated desolation, that was all. There was nothing to lose, everything to win, and — well, she would make the effort, and her cheeks flushed and her eyes shone with the resolve.

The contest was only three days away, and Old Oliver, deep in a monologue on the Ptolemies, which meant that he was very drunk, was at his most polished and courteous best, while Madeline considered ways and means.

He lay on the couch, and dwelt charmingly on the foibles of young Ptolemy the Second, and though Madeline looked at him sadly, a forlorn little hope was stirring at her heart.

Her dear old father ! How well she knew the discouragements he had met bravely in earlier days; the cruel disappointments that might well have proved too much for stronger men than Old Oliver. And as memory after memory swept over her, hope stirred stronger and stronger. When even the Early Greeks failed to hold his interest, which meant that Old Oliver was sober, Madeline broached the subject to him, and as she had known he would, he gladly and eagerly acquiesced. But this meant nothing in particular. He was always ready to do anything his Madeline suggested, and no one grieved more than he at his own lapses. He just forgot, that is all.

But as she painted in glowing words what this opportunity might mean to them, some of the fire of old days came back to him. His dark eyes gleamed, and his thin right hand pushed back his white hair with a nervous gesture. Then, when Madeline brought the violin to him, and he closed his lids over the rapt look in his eyes she knew so well, and the bow was swept down over the strings

in a fashion all his own, her heart thrilled, and her chin went up in the familiar and arrogant way of by-gone days.

And Lakeview was stirred to the wildest pitch of excitement, when Madeline's little preparations made it evident that Old Oliver was going into the contest. There was gloomy prophesying. Madeline never could keep him sober till the great event was over, but, could that feat be accomplished, no one doubted that Lakeview would straightway become known as the home of one of the Immortals.

So the population, almost *en masse,* was at the depot the day that Madeline and her father went forth as suppliants to the Temple of Fame. As the train pulled out and Madeline took a last look at the eager, village faces, a feverish light burned in her eyes, as if fed from some secret fire.

There is no need to dwell on the incidents connected with that great meeting. The outward signs indicating genius, certainly were not wanting, for geniuses in all sorts of eccentric garb, and in various stages of dishabille, were there. They had come from the garrets and the tall timbers, and the result in aggregate was both fearful and appalling. But however humorous was the situation God alone knows what pathos lay behind it.

When Madeline and her father arrived at the big Coliseum, her heart sank a little. She had not known that the whole world held so many geniuses, foregathering here as the flower of one small state. But Old Oliver was confident and hopeful; he was his own courtly distinguished self, and Madeline took heart.

The preliminaries were soon over. Old Oliver drew a card with the day and the hour for his private appearance before an examining committee. They would determine his fitness to appear before the Long Haired Tribunal. As this Tribunal's time was worth presumably many dollars a minute, only the final contestants were to appear before them.

Madeline drew a breath of relief when she saw that her father's number entitled him to appear before the Committee that very afternoon. If he failed, why they could return home at once, their suspense over. If he succeeded, then it would be time enough to consider the problem of keeping him in fit condition for the final ordeal.

It was with an intense, expectant but dolorous air, that Lakeview awaited the evening passenger train from the city that evening, but a thrill of pride in their heretofore rather despised townsman ran through it, when Madeline and Old Oliver appeared on the platform. Madeline, proud with a glorious light in her eyes, and Old Oliver, dignified, courtly, yet with a new something in his manner that rather awed Lakeview.

A glance at their faces, and that portion of the village assembled, knew that Old Oliver had been found worthy to appear before the Supreme Tribunal. This would be a week later, and in the meantime, Lakeview took Old Oliver to its heart, so to speak, and gloried in him. And he basked in the glow and warmth of this new deference and homage, and Madeline was radiant. The whole world grew roseate. And when the villagers conspired with her lovingly, to keep temptation out of Old Oliver's path, her heart that had only known bitterness so long, warmed to them. And Old Oliver, be it said to his credit, tried most manfully to live up to what was expected of him. And the great day drew near.

Now, a week's abstinence, and the excitement of suspense, combined to make Old Oliver irritable and hard to manage — it filled Madeline with alarm. So when old Jabez Merriweather and Silas Thorne, two of the village veterans, suggested rather timidly, yet earnestly, that they be allowed, at their own expense, to accompany herself and Old Oliver to the city as a body-guard, her fretted heart grew easier, and touched by their loyalty and friendship, she accepted their offer warmly. As before, the village in a body saw them off, and as upon the first occasion, Madeline's eyes burned with a feverish light.

At the Coliseum, Old Oliver again drew a number, which showed him to be, this time, the last on the program. The geniuses had simmered down to twelve after the Committee had finished with them, and these were to appear in the final contest before an immense and fashionable audience in the Coliseum that very night.

The weary hours dragged along somehow. Old Oliver was irritable and apprehensive by turns; he trembled with nervousness. But his faithful body-guard never left his side, and Made-

line realized thankfully that, without Jabez and Silas, she would speedily have lost control of her father.

And when finally they sat in the little anteroom off the big stage, and awaited Old Oliver's summons, Madeline, her own nerves tense, counted the minutes till the ordeal should be over.

In the big auditorium, brilliant with lights, and sweet with the perfume of flowers, sat an immense audience. On a dais, below and at one side of the stage, sat the Long Haired Tribunal, famous personages all of them, and the people gazed their fill at such a collection of genius, recognized and in embryo, if judges and contestants could be so classified.

In the anteroom, Madeline, her father and the body-guard heard the strains of the violin in a magnificent movement by Genius Number One, and the suspense from that moment became maddening. It was plainly telling on Old Oliver, and Madeline was beside herself as she saw even the stolid body-guard grow apprehensive. "The fresh air will revive him," she said hopefully, when an hour had worn itself away, and she saw that Old Oliver had almost reached the point of nervous collapse.

"Walk him for about twenty minutes," she said to the anxious and disturbed veterans. "It will be almost time then, for him to appear."

Yet it was with a curious misgiving that she saw them go, and before the twenty minutes had finally crawled by, her heart was like lead.

So, when the door opened at last, she knew in an instant what had happened. Old Oliver was talking in his happiest vein, regarding a little incident in the life of Young Ptolemy the Second, to the two dejected figures on each side of him. Madeline looked at Old Oliver in silence for a moment.

"Oh, father," she said hopelessly, then buried her face in her arms.

Old Silas, with the tears running down his cheeks, said brokenly:

"He had it with him, Miss Madeline. It was all over before we could do anything, and — he's been so long without — it — it come easier."

"I know," she said quietly, and remained silent a long while,

her face hidden; while Old Oliver strolled up and down the room, happily interested in his monologue, and blandly oblivious of Jabez's fiercely muttered and frequent, "Gol darn ye's.'

Presently Madeline lifted her head and stared fixedly into space, a feverish spot in each cheek that Jabez faintly recalled as familiar. It made him vaguely uneasy, and he took her gently by the arm:

"Come, Miss Madeline; it's all over; let us get home," but Madeline only looked at him with a curious smile. "In a minute," she said faintly, and the two old men, uneasy and alarmed, waited.

Madeline's brain acted swiftly. Yes, they must notify the Tribunal at once that her father was ill, and would have to forfeit his chance. Then they would go back to Lakeview on the midnight train; back to poverty, and her father would be "Old Oliver" again, spoken in pity and contempt. No hope, no future, the years stretching out interminably.

Yes, they must go at once, for the moment for her father's appearance was now close at hand. The violin solo of Genius Number Eleven throbbed on the air, and snatches of it came to the hopeless little company in the ante-room.

Once more Madeline let her thoughts dwell on what success would mean. A cure for her father first of all, and when he realized that his genius was recognized at last, renewed vigor and ambition, an honored old age——

She rose. The half defined purpose that had lurked in the background of her thoughts all these weeks, leaped suddenly into being. Quietly but swiftly, she removed the violin from its case, and a sudden light leaped into Old Oliver's eyes. He stretched out his arms.

"Presently, daddy," she said softly, and her hands were shaking now. A boy at the door beckoned, and she nodded. Jabez and Silas watched her in fascinated wonder. Then, as she said to them quietly, while her cheeks blazed:

"Carry the violin, Silas; take his arm, Jabez," the latter hung back. "For the Lord's sake, Miss Madeline, what ye going to do?" Horror of impending disgrace was in his eyes.

"Take his arm," she repeated sternly, and Jabez, with the air

of going to Judgment, obeyed; with Madeline holding the other arm, and Silas trailing forlornly along with the violin, the little party started for the stage, Old Oliver still volubly discussing the Ptolemies, which meant that he was extremely drunk indeed.

Old Jabez cowered and shrank, and as the glittering lights and the people came partly into view, he half tottered. In his eyes, Madeline had gone crazy, and in addition to this calamity, Lakeview was about to be held up to the shame of the world.

Just at this instant, Madeline laid the violin in her father's arms, and pushed him toward, and out upon the lighted stage.

"Play for me, daddy," she whispered, and Old Oliver, without a moment's hesitation, lifted the violin to his chin before the waiting audience. Then came the most thrilling moment of their lives to old Jabez and Silas, for, throwing herself upon them, Madeline trembled and hid her face.

The audience, unaware of what was taking place behind the scenes, and, truth to tell, a little weary of so much genius, awaited this last number, bored and impatient. But it straightened up as a tall, military figure came into view; and as a white head bent lovingly over a violin, with his chin resting upon it caressingly; when the dark eyes closed, and there came a rapt look on his face, a faint thrill went through the audience.

But when the long, aristocratic, nervous fingers swept the bow over the strings, in the sweet, slow sweep of the double-chording, something tore at the heart-strings of every soul in the audience. Old faces that had long been dreaming under the stars, smiled again — life was young and full of laughter, and the rose-mist covered the dear, old world once more. Swift followed upon this rapture, the pain of uncomprehended things, — hearts throbbed with passion, or ached with a new, sweet pain. Then came the peace that follows suffering — tranquility and rest. Ambition for awhile, stirred hot in the blood ——

The tall figure on the stage was forgotten, and as with closed eyes he played and played, and yet played on, the people dreamed their own dreams; suffered, wept, and were glad.

The genius had been found. It needed no Tribunal to decide that. The Tribunal, in the meantime, reckless of its dignity, forgetful of jealousy, leaned forward, intense and absorbed. Even

the eleven other geniuses forgot the prize while Old Oliver played, and remembered it only in the death-like stillness that fell, when Old Oliver, after a suddenly bewildered look at the audience, retreated from the stage.

Then the immense auditorium shook with mighty applause, as Old Oliver was brought forth and literally crowned with the laurel wreath.

When he was finally restored to the happy, little group in the ante-room, Madeline clung tightly to Old Oliver, as she sobbed over and over again, "Daddy, daddy, forgive me," it was for your sake, dear, and a ray of light began suddenly to penetrate the dark places of poor, old Jabez's understanding.

Now Old Oliver, no matter in what condition he went on the stage, came off it as sober as Jabez himself, and he knew instantly what had happened. And as he realized that his genius had been recognized at last, — that fame and fortune were his, — as he looked into the future with Madeline's loving eyes, he squared his shoulders and lifted his old head proudly, — then held the sobbing girl close.

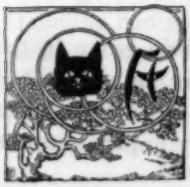
Meanwhile light was slower in coming to Silas' befogged intelligence, and he looked at the more astute Jabez with entreaty.

"Good Lord, ye gol-darned idiot," that delighted gentleman said vigorously, his sense of humor getting the best of him. "Don't ye see?" and here he lowered his voice to a confidential tone: "Madeline knowed all the time that Old Oliver played better when he was drunk. Ketch on?" and he chucked him genially in his obtuse ribs, whereupon the two old veterans gave way to unholy but subdued mirth. Yet, in deference to a little silent appeal in Madeline's eyes, the two old fellows, in spite of the fiercest temptation, kept her pathetic secret, like the loyal gentlemen they were.

And that is how Lakeview became known as the home of one of the Immortals.

His Mr. Gourley.*

BY U. S. PARSONS.



"A WEDDING in heaven," remarked Dr. Ives to his friend, as they viewed the sunset glories.

Scarlet and gold faded into an after-glow of lavender, and then the night sky bent low, so low that its diadems seemed to rest upon the mountains. The two men still lingered at the window when a horseman came out of the dusk on the Ram's Horn and halted before the house. The doctor turned to answer the call, and the other man, stepping to the vacant place, saw the crescent moon and, almost within its purple horns, a gleaming yellow star. These wanderers of the night did, in truth, suggest the bliss of a happy union.

"The strange man of the mountains wants you to come to him at once." It was the doctor's voice, and the younger man turned in silent surprise.

"Yes, you," laughed Ives, "and he's only seen you once. The adventure's worth your while, Dick."

"But Annie——," began Morrow, mindful of his wife, whom he had hoped to rejoin on the coast the following day.

"Don't worry about her," interrupted the doctor. "She's in good hands."

Morrow was not slow in deciding to go, actuated as much by curiosity as by a desire to satisfy the stranger.

"Tell me more about him," he said, as he prepared for the journey. Ives, with elbows on his knees and head in his hands, was gazing at the floor in thought.

"You've nosed around these mountains as a mining expert and found the lode just east of Markley's claim rich enough to ransom a king, haven't you?"

"Yes, twenty of them," replied Morrow.

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"Well, sir, Carew owns it, knows its value, and won't work it. He ekes out a bare existence with pan and shovel, and neither friends nor schemers can move him from his purpose, and that? — well, Carew's too deep for me." Morrow had listened to nothing new thus far, for Tennyson Carew was the wonder of the Amador mines. The expert tugged at his boot and waited for the doctor to proceed.

"It's mighty dark on the Horn when the moon is down," said Ives, "and there's no time to lose."

"Go on, doctor,"

"Well, Tennyson Carew won't talk to you like a miner, I'll warrant. He's a scholar and traveller who has seen everything. He came here, ten years ago, with a friend, George Gourley, a moonish mystic, born in India of English parents. Gourley was the master, Carew a follower, and both were saturated with Eastern lore. It was all a sort of education for the people here. Volcanoites will never forget — "

"Come, now," interrupted Morrow.

The old man paused, straightened himself and smiled at Morrow's incredulous eyes.

"Sounds like a fairy tale, I know, but you'll see, and maybe hear, enough up there tonight to convince you that two men once lived in the Sierras like the Nawab of Rampur. Their religion was a fantastic belief from India and they walked our streets like a couple of Sheiks, their fingers blazing with diamonds of the first water. Their bungalow — did you ever see that?"

"Yes, from a distance," answered Morrow.

"They built it with their own hands," said the doctor. "Not from penurious motives, — oh, no. They were as generous as the wind. I think there was something too sacred about it for profane hands. Inside it was Persian, I guess. Anyway, I dined there once, and we sat on soft cushions before a mat spread over the richest kind of carpet. It was summer, and under a punka, swung by a slave, we ate Holwah, drank Mocha and sherbet, and smoked chibouks."

"And Gourley — what became of him?" asked Morrow, throwing a talma over his shoulders.

"Crumbled to powder — vanished in gas — was swallowed by

the earth, or translated. God and Carew only know, and Carew won't tell."

Morrow silently studied the face of his old friend as the latter added: "I hardly think Gourley was translated, though, for some things that don't jibe with chariots of fire disappeared too. From the day his friend evaporated, Carew was a changed man. He left off his Oriental trappings, sent the slaves back to India and packed up a thousand and one curios from Constantinople to Calcutta. Ever since, he has refused to sell, bond or work the mine, and replies, with a far-away look: 'Some day. You do not understand. Some day.'" Dr. Ives paused again and turned to his desk.

"Well," said Morrow, "Carew is mysterious enough, but Gourley — why, people drop out of sight every day. Any good Sheik could get tired of his job, foot it to Jackson and — "

"Ah," protested Ives, with raised hands, "Gourley disappeared almost with the turning of my back. You see he had been sick — very sick. It was then the European in them cropped out — they turned to medicine. I found him lying on his couch, suffering from a malady that might have carried him off in the ordinary way if he had cared to wait. At eleven o'clock my patient was sleeping quietly, and I went to the door to look out. It was just such a heaven-brooding night as this, not too cold for comfort, and Carew soon joined me. After sitting there, smoking and talking, for perhaps twenty minutes, Carew rose and slipped inside, I following. Gourley was gone! Every window was securely fastened inside, and the only door was the one by which we had been sitting."

Morrow looked at Ives in a dazed way, and the latter turned the leaves of an old call book.

"Gourley left a farewell message to his partner," he continued, "and it was so stilted and peculiar that I copied it, as near as I could, from memory. Here it is:—

TENNYSON:

The ages call and the earth answers. Darkness will enfold me, and a million million javelins of light will be thrown from heaven's ramparts in vain. Dripping water will measure out my years of waiting,—waiting for the hour of new life. When my star has wandered long and finds its own, then shall I come. Will it be a glad return? Shall I go onward and upward toward the light, or must I still wait and grovel? Help me, O Tennyson, by the power of

watchful self-denial, until I am called. Then can I lead you as I was led. Then shall the things we loved in this life be yours. Only the canutillo ring shall I claim for my own. It is where water is dripping, dripping the heavy hours away. Tennyson, adieu. GEORGE.

The doctor closed the book.

"That was all," he said, "and it seemed to satisfy Carew. If any man ever practised self-denial for nine years, that man is Tennyson Carew. But go now, my boy. You must be back before morning."

Morrow needed no urging, for lover never kept tryst more willingly. Slowly and carefully his sure-footed animal carried him up that narrow defile, never stopping until they reached the last long sweep to the summit. He turned in his saddle and looked back over a sea of pines. The balsamic breeze stirred its billows out to the horizon, where the golden star still trembled in the embrace of the ruby moon. Far up, on the rock-ribbed heights, a thousand plumes waved an answering adieu. Forgetful of everything, save the man and his message, even of a little woman beyond the mountains, he went slowly up, reaching the plateau long after the moon had gone.

Four stunted pines stood like sentinels at the corners of the bungalow, but all other growths had been cleared away for a radius of a hundred feet. Through a maze of boulders, scattered by primeval wrath, he groped his way to the light streaming from the doorway. A tall, muscular form stood there.

"I should have met you on the Ram's Horn with a lantern." The voice was musical and powerful and the enunciation perfect.

"Then I am the man you want to see," said Morrow, as he grasped the outstretched hand.

"You are," he answered. "Come in."

The interior was a grotesque mingling of an American miner's belongings and a few remaining luxuries of the Orient. The odors of camphor and sandal wood came from an adjoining room, where great brass-bound chests told a story of faded glory.

Carew seated himself on the couch in the corner and motioned Morrow to the campstool opposite. Broad-chested, with a shapely head, clear, resolute eyes, and a virile black beard, the miner won the admiration of the visitor at once.

"Did you notice the sky tonight?" Carew asked, kicking back a corner of the rug and laying hold of the chest at the head of the couch. Partly in a thrill of expectation, partly in genuine appreciation, Morrow rubbed his hands in delight and answered: "It was solemnly grand."

"True — see this," Carew responded, throwing back the lid of the box. Embedded on its inner side, seven amethysts, forming a crescent, blazed with more than amethystine splendor round a glittering topaz. He removed his coat and rolled up his sleeve. A tattooed crescent and star fairly pulsated with deepest purple and yellow in the white flesh. A feeling of dread and uncertainty was fast getting hold of Morrow as he looked, and remembered the wondrous sight in the sky, but the sane observations of the miner that followed reassured him.

"We know why the cat's fur bristles in a thunder-storm," said Carew. "Some day, we shall know why the stars, those stones, and this work of the tattooer's needle, all glow with sympathetic brilliance. Many a woman has noticed, at times, that her gems have an unusual sparkle, but her vision was not clear enough to see a concordant brightness in other things. This night is pregnant with sympathy, and happily you and I can recognize its various manifestations, if we cannot now grasp the cause. It was this insight that caused me to reach out for you and that made you come to me. You came gladly, didn't you?" A smile as sweet as ever came from baby dreamland softened the strong man's features, and was met by an answering nod and smile from Morrow.

Carew bent over to replace the box and rug. The visitor's eyes were directed to the floor underneath the couch, but his vision was in thrall. The strange man raised a face all-glorious with hope.

"I had a friend once. He was called away to wander in preparation for a new birth. For months I have felt the ever-increasing power of his presence in the sunshine, the air, the trees, in the very rocks themselves. His coming is at hand. Heaven and earth proclaim it. Even now, as you sit there, I see him rising out of *you*. It is the same George Gourley, yet not the same, for it is Gourley refined, purified, ennobled." The miner spoke with the charming ease of the trained orator, but Morrow experienced

momentary disappointment as Carew's thought took this turn. Had only some fancied resemblance to his old friend prompted Carew to send for him?

"Even you," continued the miner, "who are of the elect, and have a vital interest in his return and future welfare, seem to listen to my talk as gibberish — but the facts that I have stated are not stranger than a thousand others in this life. It is the insight of the few, given them by trial and suffering, that makes it all so strange to the duller eyes of the many."

"I see," objected Morrow. "The caress of the rain and the smile of the sun bring life out of the buried seed, and why — ?"

"Well said!" interrupted Carew, rising to his feet in delight. "And you and I will go tonight where the seed lay buried. We shall find the flower gone up into the sunlight, but the husks shall be ours. As dead leaves renew the soil, so these remnants of my friend's old life will make fertile our existence."

"A practical turn in affairs, you see." He was lighting a lantern as he spoke. Handing the visitor a crowbar, and throwing a rope across his own shoulders, he turned to go. With awe, but with trust born of the man's confident and friendly manner, Morrow followed.

The place they sought was not distant, but the direct approach being perilous, they were compelled to go down the mountain and around, in a circuitous route, over rough rocks and through ragged brush.

"Nearly underneath our starting-point," Carew said, as he halted and placed the lantern before the long, narrow opening beneath a shelving of rock. While making the descent, Morrow's foot struck a jutting rock. He rested there a moment to look back. It was a weird sight. Stalactites hung in glittering cones from the roof of the cavern, and water dripped into black pools on the floor. Far beyond, through a glistening colonnade, he saw an opening into another room. Carefully Carew guided his friend's feet between the black mirrors, to the other side. Handing back the lantern the miner vaulted into this chamber.

"We are within fifty feet of the house," he said, as Morrow joined him. It was a mere hole, compared with the cave.

"See," said Carew, pointing to the back wall. "Closed for nine

weary years." His voice was heavy with emotion. Morrow looked. A slab was bolted to the rock.

"What time is it?" Carew asked.

"Ten minutes of twelve," Morrow answered, with his watch before the lantern. The miner's trembling hand turned the wick. Out of the intense blackness came a phosphorescent glimmer on the wall. A spot no larger than a dime glowed near the center of the slab. Immovable as statues, and as dumb, the two men watched the light spread slowly over the surface. The silence was broken only by the dripping water. Gradually the glow increased until the slab was a panel of light. Morrow's dazed mind tried to find relief in speech, but his tongue was lead. Carew's face was now visible in the fire of the rock. Hope was no longer there — the miner had passed beyond it. The delight of certainty — the consummation of nine hungry years — had taken its place. Like a triumphant chemist bending over his pot, he watched the light change from ruby to violet, flicker and go out. Instantly he struck a light and as quickly Morrow drew out his watch. Twelve o'clock ! It had seemed a night of waiting.

In a second the crowbar was behind the slab, and one wrench brought it in pieces to their feet. Carew raised the lantern. Morrow gasped and shuddered. A yellowish, gauzy robe enveloped the remains stretched at full length inside the narrow crypt. The head lay in a position that spoke of everlasting peace. The shriveled hands were crossed high above the breast over a little gray cube of stone.

"Gourley's old clothes," said Carew lightly, thrusting his hands through the mineral veil. It crumbled as he raised the clasped fingers and drew forth their prize.

"They are nothing to me," the miner added, and the dead hands fell back with a clink.

"Come," he said, and turned to go.

The joy of possession was in his voice, his walk, even in the swing of his arms, as they left the cavern. They spoke little while scrambling up, and not until the house was reached did Morrow give voice to the questioning within him.

"You placed — him there?" he asked. Carew drew back the rug from the floor and exposed the nailed door beneath the couch.

"No," he answered, "we discovered the cave from this side and built the house over the mouth. The descent to the cavern through the floor was easy. He wished to rest there and prepared his place. When the summons came he went gladly and trustfully. I filled up this opening, and while he waited I watched and tried to be faithful. In every other visit to the cave I have been warned, as I stood before that slab, to lay no impious hands upon these mountains, for far below them he hovered in preparation for a grander, fuller, freer existence. But tonight, the fire died, he is risen, and I am free!"

Carew raised his arm as he spoke and the little cube fell. Its thin sides burst.

"Crœsus!" cried Morrow, with a start. Diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires and the gold of their settings, were scattered over the center of the table. His admiring eyes roved over that spot of many colored fires to a canutillo's light. Carew silently fondled the gems and smiled as he watched the rapt face of his friend. Again the drops of light oozed through the miner's fingers, and again Morrow's eyes found rest in the soothing green glow.

"The richest mine in the Sierras will hum now," said Carew, taking up one more handful. "The cavern is outside the quartz-bearing vein. You and I will close it forever and leave the shell of Gourley there." One by one the jewels dropped upon the table until but one remained in the miner's hand for Morrow's waiting eyes.

"A wedding ring," exclaimed Carew, leaning over and placing the green stone in his friend's hand. "It seals the plighted troth of Gourley to a new life." Then came ringing in Morrow's ears the words of Gourley: 'Only the canutillo shall I claim.' He opened his lips in protest, but Carew's hand promptly went over his mouth.

"It is his, and I congratulate you," said the miner playfully. "It only remains for us to make his pathway secure. This in pledge of that happy duty." He rose, and Morrow grasped the outstretched hand mechanically in a compact he could not fathom.

"All genuine revelation is progressive. Sleep over it here. I can treat you to a prospector's breakfast of coffee and bacon," said Carew with an all-compelling smile.

In the morning the miner, light-hearted but still impenetrable, left Morrow at the summit.

His careful horse was a godsend on that dizzy pass, for the rider was lost in a haze of speculation. Near the bottom he halted and drew the emerald from his pocket, looking long at the splendid jewel. As he looked, the morning sun playing on its facets was as a light over green pastures and beside still waters. Raising his eyes, he saw a familiar figure below. The doctor grinned in greeting.

"Look like a saint coming down from a mount of transfiguration," he called. "What's happened?"

The two men reined their horses alongside of each other, and Morrow told his friend. As Ives listened, his countenance first showed amusement, then criticism, and finally took on a look of perplexed interest. Morrow finished. Ives handed him a paper.

"In my concern for you I forgot this," he confessed sheepishly, and gazed dreamily down the cañon. Morrow read the message:

"You are father to a bouncing boy, born at midnight. Mother and child doing well."

There was a rush of joy to the father's heart, but the face upturned to the doctor was a study. For several seconds they were silent.

"'More things in heaven and earth than ever were dreamed of in our philosophy,'" said Ives slowly, but the remark was lost. The new father was conning over the words: George Gourley Morrow.

Through the Heart of Davy Crockett.*

BY FRANK WAITE.

T was a hot day in North Texas. The blistering rays from the sun seemed focussed, as if with a huge sun-glass, upon that particular spot on the earth's surface. Under the great shed where the Lothrop-Armstrong Lumber Company each day sawed up a thousand logs, the roaring, hissing boilers, the pounding engines, and the screaming saws made a perfect inferno on earth. Five hundred negroes, in white canvas breeches and heavy brogans, worked like battling giants, while the cooling streams of perspiration trickled down their brown bodies, bare to the waist.

At one end of the shed two men strained at a lever, and a monster pecan-log slipped down upon the saw-carriage that lay waiting. The foreman shook his head.

"That's a big one," he shouted in the ear of George Lothrop, senior in the firm.

"Yes," said Lothrop. "Somehow I don't like to see that log cut. Stood for fifty years on the old place. I've eaten many a hatful of nuts from it. We boys named it Davy Crockett," he added, reminiscently. "Yes, that's Davy Crockett. Saw in good condition?"

"New one on this alley," the foreman answered.

Lothrop walked over and watched the great disk as it lay idly whirling in its bearings, whining and growling like a beast of prey before tearing into the vitals of its victim. He listened to the sharp click and snap of the belt on its hurried journeyings to the saw and back again to the big drive-wheel in monotonous repetition.

Beneath the saw-gearing was a deep, box-like dust-pit, into which the tiny yellow flakes of wood showered and fell at each side of

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the flashing steel plate, like snow-drifts against the window-pane. A bent old man with a long-handled scoop raked together the fluffy substance and painfully lifted it over his head on to the pile behind him. The top of the heap crumbled away and slipped back around the man's feet and close up to the saw. The man thrust his scoop into the dust too near the saw, and leaning on its handle, looked up.

With a quick, sharp snarl the saw's hungry teeth ripped through the steel-covered part of the handle, and the man fell to his knees. Lothrop saw the danger, and quickly the shrill signal "Off gear" came from his lips. The old man climbed out, weak and trembling, and the infernal roar began again.

"What's the reason you don't cart that dust away from there?" Lothrop shouted to him.

"Haven't had time, sir," quavered the cracked voice.

"You haven't had time! Then you stay out; I'll put somebody at it who has more time."

"I wish you would, sir," the old man said, as he walked away. "The boy is sick to-day, and I've been doing what I could when the machine wasn't busy."

"Oh, you're on the planing machine, are you? I didn't know that; I beg your pardon — I didn't understand," said Lothrop, ashamed of his hasty words. "Go back to the planing — I'll shovel awhile myself."

Lothrop stepped out upon a heavy slab that lay suspended over one corner of the pit, and stood there while the saw passed through the last few feet of the great log. The long waste slab, torn, like flesh of the body, from the trunk it had shielded in the storms of two generations, went rumbling away to the slab-furnace, and the carriage scurried back for another trip to the saw.

Lothrop turned to climb by the ladder into the pit. Suddenly the plank that bore him up slipped, turned, and he fell floundering waist-deep in the treacherous mass below. The sight of the old man's danger a few minutes before was still fresh in Lothrop's mind, and he remembered how impossible it had seemed to shape his tongue and lips for the whistled signal he had given. He wondered if he could make that signal now. He tried — his heart seemed to beat louder than the sound his lips sent forth. He shook

himself to steady his nerves. Then he felt a sliding, shoving mass strike his body. Cautiously lifting one foot to the surface he tried to regain the three or four feet he had slipped down the incline. This seemed to loosen the whole surface layer of the pile. Slowly, steadily, he began sliding towards the saw.

In desperation he lunged for the plank he had lost, then fell backward, head foremost. As he went down, his eyes caught one flashing glimpse of the big six-foot saw, and his heart sickened. For a moment he lay perfectly still, or as nearly so as possible, for his whole frame shook in utter horror of what awaited him. His feet lay three feet above his head, and the blood rushed to his brain in maddening torrents. The hard, fine grains of wood filled his eyes and ground and tore the tender flesh. He dared not move now, for every motion meant a slip nearer — steadily, inevitably nearer — to that awful Thing!

If he could only see it! He knew that its deadly teeth were not more than a foot away from his head now, for he felt the cold current of air that rushed around with it. For a while the cool wind soothed his throbbing brain. He threw out an arm and groped for something to stay his snail-like career into Death's teeth. With the tips of his fingers he felt the end of the scoop handle that had been snatched from the hands of the old man. Wildly he clutched it — and slipped closer to the smooth, shining surface with the hissing teeth.

Now the cold wind tossed his hair about. Colder and colder it grew, until the boon became a torment. A great chill came over him, and he sneezed. Another slip. Then two more inches, and the chilling current at his head seemed to freeze his very blood. Again a sneeze moved his head a little closer. His dull, bloody eyes gazed up into the free air above. His crazed brain wondered — when? This instant? Perhaps. No; not yet! Maybe now, — NOW!

Now, now, now, now, now! mocked the big, throbbing Thing.

A heavy jar brought Lothrop to his senses. His brain reeled. He strained his gory eyes to see. The space above was darkening. Then the saw sang out. They were taking another slab from old Davy Crockett!

He cried out — too late! The roar and clash above made his

shout a whisper in his own ears. Oh, why didn't he think! Why didn't he call when there was a lull in the noise, when he might have been heard. Too late now! No human possibility could keep his head away from those gnashing teeth while they ate their way through the heart of Davy Crockett. Deep into the soft bed under him he dug his fingers.

"What a fate," he thought, "to have my head split like a block of wood! — my brain, that knows every cog and belt in this complex mechanism, to be ground and scattered in the very dust of its industry!" And the dust came showering and pelted his face. It filled his ears and crept up under his chin. Then his face was covered. When he breathed his nostrils filled. He opened his mouth, and the little wooden flakes choked him. The pounding and rumbling above grew far, far away — farther, farther, far ——

Under the saw slipped Lothrop's head, and with a fierce, savage shriek, the long, chisel-teeth ripped off the scalp — and stopped!

. . . . . .

George Lothrop moved uneasily on his cot. He raised a hand, felt the bandages on his smarting scalp, leaped to his feet, and whistled "Off gear!" When he was quiet again the foreman bent over him.

"It's all right, Boss — gear's off," he said. "You see, that disk wa'n't made for sawin' crowbars; so when it got to that bar it jes' lost a few teeth, and then stopped fightin'."

Lothrop smiled. "It's a good thing we boys selected just that point to drive in that crow-bar," he said.